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DE RUEHVL #0008 0061345
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 061345Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4048
INFO RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 2060
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 3694
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3832

UNCLAS VILNIUS 000008

SIPDIS

EMBASSY WARSAW FOR REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICER
EMBASSY COPENHAGEN FOR REGIONAL ESTH OFFICER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [PREL](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: AFTER H1N1 EPIDEMIC ENDS, VACCINE ARRIVES IN
LITHUANIA

REF: 09 VILNIUS 679

¶1. SUMMARY: The Lithuanian government received about 27,000 doses of H1N1 flu vaccine on December 30, just over a week after it had declared that flu was no longer at epidemic levels throughout the country. The vaccine is being offered first to medical personnel and to those in high-risk categories. The Embassy has received a separate supply of H1N1 vaccine and begun vaccinating high-risk American employees and family members. The GOL has reported 25 flu deaths this winter, including 17 from H1N1. End summary.

¶2. The GOL purchased 27,000 doses of Pandemrix, an H1N1 vaccine manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline, from the Dutch government for 1 million LTL (USD 417,000), and received the drugs in Lithuania on December 30. GOL officials said the vaccine would not be available for retail sale, and that the Ministry of Health is putting together a distribution plan. Priority groups include medical personnel and people in high-risk categories, including children. The Embassy also has received its first shipment of vaccine and has begun giving shots to American employees and their family members who are in high risk groups, which includes all children. No H1N1 vaccine is available for purchase in Lithuania, although antiviral medicines remain available.

¶3. On December 21, the National Commission for Extreme Situations said that flu in Lithuania was no longer at epidemic levels, four weeks after the pandemic was declared. But new flu cases were still being reported at the level of 27.8 per 10,000 residents in the week after December 21. The most recent death from H1N1 flu occurred January 5, when a 23-year-old woman from Jurbarkas died eight days after being hospitalized in Kaunas. That brought the toll of flu deaths in Lithuania this winter to 25: 17 from H1N1 and eight from seasonal flu. The first flu death occurred November 17. GOL officials and medical experts say that a second wave of flu, probably a mix of H1N1 and seasonal flu, is expected in late January or early February.

¶4. Nearly all schools are reopening as scheduled after winter holidays; at the height of the epidemic, more than a third of Lithuania's schools were shuttered because of high absenteeism.

LEADER